

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE E2NEW YORK TIMES
14 September 1986

As Usual, the K.G.B. Has Its Knuckles Bared

By PHILIP TAUBMAN

WHILE Mikhail S. Gorbachev is reform-minded on many issues, he showed no sign of softness when it came to letting the K.G.B. handle, with its customary hard-line efficiency, the arrest and indictment on espionage charges of Nicholas S. Daniloff, a correspondent of U.S. News & World Report.

The Soviet intelligence and secret police agency, officially known as the Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti, or Committee for State Security, clearly was the driving force behind Mr. Daniloff's 14-day detention, which, at least temporarily, threw a sudden chill into relations between Washington and Moscow.

That the Kremlin was willing to let the K.G.B. jeopardize ties with Washington at a particularly delicate time — Secretary of State George P. Shultz and Foreign Minister Eduard A. Shevardnadze are scheduled to meet this week — was renewed evidence, if any was needed, that the agency has long since bounced back from troubled days in the 1950's and 1960's to become again a

major force in Moscow. "The arrest of Nick Daniloff was not the action of a rogue K.G.B. but rather the deliberate decision of the Soviet leadership to support the desire of the K.G.B. for revenge," a Western diplomat said last week.

The K.G.B. is the world's largest intelligence and police agency, according to Western diplomats, operating on an annual budget equal to billions of dollars and employing more than 700,000 people.

It is responsible for diverse domestic and foreign security functions handled in the United States by a number of organizations, including the Central Intelligence Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Border Patrol, the Secret Service and the National Security Agency.

The K.G.B. is also a state of mind. For Russians it is the embodiment of the authoritarian nature of the Soviet system. "The committee," or the "G.B." as many Russians refer to the agency, is the hand that raps on the front door at midnight. Its roots stretch back across the decades to Stalin's terror, Lenin's consolidation of power and even before that to czarist secret police forces. The modern Soviet secret police was founded under Lenin by Felix Dzerzhinsky and over the years it has been known

successively as the Cheka, G.P.U., O.G.P.U., N.K.V.D., N.K.G.B., M.G.B. and, since 1954, the K.G.B.

Overseas, the K.G.B. is the primary Soviet spying apparatus, fielding thousands of agents and informants to collect information about foreign governments, penetrate their intelligence services, conduct covert operations, obtain advanced Western technology and attempt to influence public opinion. What the K.G.B. lacks in sophisticated spy technology compared with the United States, it more than makes up with manpower, according to Western experts.

Domestically, it is the overlord of a vast system of internal controls and the enforcer of political orthodoxy. Although the days of mass terror ended with Stalin, the K.G.B. still manages a system of labor camps and prisons — the Gulag described by Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn — used to incarcerate political dissidents like Anatoly F. Shcharansky, who was freed earlier this year after nine years of confinement. Every sizable enterprise — from factories to movie studios to athletic teams — has a K.G.B. unit to watch it from within, as if, in American terms, an F.B.I. agent were assigned to a regular job with the Washington Redskins, to check constantly on their political beliefs, patriotism and produc-

tion quota fulfillment. Among the agency's myriad functions is an effort to prevent the introduction and circulation of foreign video cassettes in the Soviet Union.

It controls the flow of people across Soviet borders, keeps tabs on foreign diplomats, correspondents, scholars and other visitors and processes and analyzes a huge volume of intelligence information gathered overseas. As the Daniloff case showed, the K.G.B. spares little effort to maintain surveillance of Western correspondents and surround them with Russian sources who can be persuaded to lead the foreigners into a trap. In this case, the K.G.B. apparently used a Russian named Misha, who had befriended Mr. Daniloff four years ago in Frunze, the capital of Soviet Kirghizia.

The influence of the K.G.B. fell to a low following Stalin's death and the failed attempt of his secret police chief, Lavrenti Beria, to seize power. Its return to respectability and power was sealed by the selection of Yuri V. Andropov, head of the K.G.B. for 15 years, as Soviet leader in 1982. Its head now is Viktor M. Chebrikov, whose status as a key power broker is confirmed by his full membership in the Politburo.

Mr. Gorbachev, whose rise to the top was accelerated by Mr. Andropov, may have benefited from K.G.B. help in his final push to become Communist Party General Secretary. Many of his rivals, including Grigory V. Romanov and Viktor V. Grishin, were removed from the Politburo by Mr. Gorbachev after reports of their corruption were widely circulated, presumably by the K.G.B.